

Greek American Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

with

Helen Caparis

December 12, 2005

Sacramento, California

By Patrick Ettinger
Capital Campus Oral History Program
California State University, Sacramento

[Session 1, December 12, 2005]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

ETTINGER: Today is Monday, December 12, 2005. My name is Patrick Ettinger. I'm assistant professor of history at California State University in Sacramento, and I'm sitting in the lovely home of Helen Caparis to talk a little bit with her about her experiences growing up as a member of the Greek American community of Sacramento, as part of our larger project on Greek American history.

So, first, Helen, thanks for agreeing to talk to us a little bit. Why don't we just start off a little bit by having you tell me a little bit about your parents.

CAPARIS: My parents were from Arcadia. My mother was from Tripolis, and my father was from a village outside of Tripolis. My dad, his father died before he was born. He was a posthumous child. He had two older brothers. Both of them came here to work, and they came to Omaha and were working on the railroad and sending money home to their families because this village is. . . . Tripolis is mountainous. I don't know if you've been there.

ETTINGER: No.

CAPARIS: It's a lovely, lovely place, but the villages were limited. You know, if it rained, the wheat grew. If it didn't, it didn't. It was a difficult way to make a living.

So they worked on the railroad. Then my father, he was in his early twenties, he worked in Tripolis at a . . . Oh, I guess you'd call it like a little grocery store when he was a youngster, and then he went to Egypt and he was in Alexandria for a short time, living with people that were from his part of the country. He thought he might work there, but couldn't handle the climate and came back home. Then his brothers brought him to Omaha, and he was a go-for, you know, running errands for the men that were working on the railroad.

Then somehow his two brothers went back to their village, to their families, and my father ended up in Sacramento with an older man who was just like a father to my dad. He was an old bachelor. We all called him "Uncle," Uncle Nick. He was a wonderful, wonderful man. Came with him and some others and he settled in Sacramento. We've never been able to find out why Sacramento and who started the migration from Omaha, because there were quite a number of people here.

They went into the hotel business, and they had. . . They weren't the grand hotels. They were hotels where the people that worked on the railroad would come for weekends, working men.

ETTINGER: This is their father?

CAPARIS: My father and his brothers. At first, there were a group of them. I guess they put their money together and started a hotel and a restaurant or a saloon, I don't know what it was at that time, on Second Street.

ETTINGER: Okay. Now let's switch gears for a second. Now, did I get your father's name?

CAPARIS: George Manolis.

ETTINGER: About when was he born, do you know, roughly?

CAPARIS: Well, I think he was born in about 1884.

ETTINGER: He was the fourth son, is that right?

CAPARIS: Yes. No, I beg your pardon. Let's see. He was the third son, and they had two sisters.

ETTINGER: Then flip it over and tell me a little about what you know about your mother's background.

CAPARIS: My mother was born in Tripolis, and her family was reasonably well off. In fact, her grandfather, after Greece was freed from the Turks, became the first mayor of Tripolis, and her dad was in business building roads, big projects. I mean, even in Turkey he had done projects. But he died. My mother didn't remember her father. He died very young.

But what happened was that they had a lot of property because when the war with Turkey was over, the men that fought in it divided land, so they had a lot of land, but they were ground-poor, you know, because when my grandfather died, his brother was in partnership with him, but that brother kept all the records. They decided that he would take the money and leave the land to my grandmother. So what they did is they sharecropped it, really. They had villagers working.

My father did well here. In fact, the restaurant that I remember as a youngster on Second Street was the Athens Hotel and Restaurant right at 908 Second Street, and he was in partnership with Uncle Nick, and they had the hotel upstairs and then they had the restaurant downstairs. They had that through the . . . Well, through part of the depression. But then a new hotel and coffee shop was built on Fourth and I Street, facing the entrance to the depot, and that was the State Hotel and Restaurant. So they took that one over and were operating that.

But when he was at the other, when he was at 908 Second Street, they also had a second hotel at the same time called the El Dorado, as far as I remember, and that was on. . . . I don't remember that hotel. I was just hearing it. But I remember the picture of my mother on the roof of that. They had that at least until '22, 1921, '22. In 1920, my dad decided to go home, visit his mother and family, and while they were there they introduced him to my mother and they got married.

ETTINGER: Your mother's name was?

CAPARIS: Vasileki. If you ask me for a last name, I can tell you, but . . .

ETTINGER: Well, why not.

CAPARIS: Okay. Her last name was Kolanopolis (phonetic). The "opolis" on the end meant son. Just about everybody from that area ends with an "opolis" on the end. Tsakopolis (phonetic), Kolanopolis, and . . .

ETTINGER: So he went back there?

CAPARIS: He went back there and he got married with the intent to come back, sell the business, and go back there and stay there.

ETTINGER: Oh, really?

CAPARIS: Yeah. But they came back and then that's when the Depression really heightened and he just couldn't go, so they never did go back.

Well, my mother, she had planned on going back. She had no one here. But they stayed and got through the Depression, which the reason I remember it was because I was taking piano lessons and I came home from piano lessons one It was after school. Uncle Nick and my dad and my mother were sitting at the kitchen table, and they didn't look very happy. They were talking. I said, "What happened?"

They said, "Well, the banks closed." They were left with the money that was in the cash register, like everybody else.

First thing I thought of was, "Great, I don't have to take any more lessons. They can't pay for them." [laughs] But it didn't work that way.

ETTINGER: So your mother, I'm interested. Your dad went back to Greece, and he'd been working here as a partner in the hotel for about ten years? He came around 1910?

CAPARIS: They must have come here, I figure We tried to figure it out. It would have to be before that, before 1910.

ETTINGER: So he was about thirty-five, or thirty, when he went back, is that right?

CAPARIS: Yeah, he was in his late thirties.

ETTINGER: He went back to see his mom, who was . . .

CAPARIS: Yes, and probably to get married.

ETTINGER: Probably to get married?

CAPARIS: Yeah.

ETTINGER: Your mom came back with him then thinking this is a short-term stay?

CAPARIS: Right, short-term. They were going to go back. In fact, it was really sad. He sent money back there, you know, at that time, which we found a record of. It was on the record that the money was wiped out, you know, to buy some property to do something there, but it never worked out because things got going from bad to worse and he just couldn't drop everything and leave, you know.

ETTINGER: From what you remember, and we'll talk a little about this later, but as a young child growing up, was his idea of going back kind of common among some of the Greek immigrants?

CAPARIS: Yes. Yes.

ETTINGER: Tell me a little bit about that.

CAPARIS: Well, they would go back and get married, for one thing, because there were no women here. In fact, there was a story going around that one man sent to Greece for a wife, but he had to go out of town to work so he sent his friend to go pick her up at the station when she came. Well, when she came, the friend liked her so much he never gave her back. This is true. I remember the story is true.

ETTINGER: That's a great story.

CAPARIS: But they'd go back and they'd get married. But then the men that were working here were working to make money to send home to support their families, and there were many, many bachelors. They never were able to go back.

ETTINGER: Did you ever meet his mom, your grandmother?

CAPARIS: No.

ETTINGER: She never came over and you never met her?

CAPARIS: No, no, they didn't. Both my grandmothers died in the twenties.

ETTINGER: What year were you born?

CAPARIS: 1921. My folks came here in 1920. My mother did.

ETTINGER: So you're their first child. Do you have siblings?

CAPARIS: No. I was the first child, and I had three brothers.

ETTINGER: Okay. Tell me their names.

CAPARIS: My first brother's name was Constantine, but they called him Gus. The teachers renamed him Gus. Then I have a brother John, who's living. Then I have a brother Paul, who's living. But do you want to know about my brothers or what?

ETTINGER: Oh, we'll get there at some point.

CAPARIS: Oh, whatever, you just ask.

ETTINGER: So you're born first and at that time your father . . . You told me about the hotels. Your father and his partner, Uncle Nick, had two or three hotels?

CAPARIS: Two hotels at that time.

ETTINGER: Where were you living? Where was the family?

CAPARIS: I know my parents said when they came in 1920, it was after the war. Properties were scarce. They couldn't find a place. There was one house in East Sac, off of Alhambra Boulevard and McKinley, but it backed up to the cemetery. The New Helvetia cemetery was there at the time. My mother would have no part of that.

Then they found this house in Oak Park, and it was west of the park, close to Grant, and they bought that. Well, then we lived there, which was a wonderful place to live at that time because across the street in the park they had like a year-round concessions. They had a zoo. They had concessions the way you have at . . .

ETTINGER: Land Park now?

CAPARIS: No, no things like that. Like at the fair, you know, where they have these games and things going. Of course, I don't remember too much about that. I remember the lions roaring at night and being scared, you know, thinking they might get out. Oak Park was just a really nice community. Thirty-fifth Street was a main street. There were two theaters, a bank, several doctors' offices, grocery stores, and pharmacists. Everybody

would walk up and down in the summer in the streets. We loved that. We just had a wonderful time.

Then the park, too, the swimming pool and all the We lived right across the street, facing the park. So we had a wonderful time growing up. Then our library was just a half a block away.

ETTINGER: That sounds ideal.

CAPARIS: Yeah, it was for growing up, just ideal.

ETTINGER: Tell me a little bit about your dad and the way he worked. Did he go off to the office? Did he go down to the hotels each day?

CAPARIS: Oh, it was just almost a twenty-four-hour job. There was always something going on. He had a nephew there, too, his brother's boy, and he had him running the hotel mainly. My father took care of the other, but they did it together. But he would leave early in the morning, I wouldn't see him, and then he'd come home late at night. There was always something going on.

So we saw him on Sundays. He'd take us on a ride up to Fair Oaks and drive us up there and then come home. My mother ran the show at home.

ETTINGER: I don't know if you remember this, but at that time in twenties, were the men staying at the hotels largely Greek still, or was it kind of a mixture of workingmen?

CAPARIS: Well, there were quite a few Greeks and whatever workingmen were around.

But the thing at that time, and it made an impression on me, other nationalities, they helped each other, you know. Like two doors down there was an employment office, and it was owned by a Jewish man, a very close friend of my dad. Well, if there was a poor man in our community and he wanted to go back home, and I don't know where they were going at that time, but I think that they were going to what is now Israel, and everybody would take a collection, you know, to send him. Everybody would support everybody. It wasn't just the Greeks, the Italians, whatever. I don't know, the people down there anyway, the businesspeople.

ETTINGER: You mean down there, the businesspeople around the hotels?

CAPARIS: Yeah, the businesspeople, yeah.

ETTINGER: That's kind of neat.

CAPARIS: Yeah.

ETTINGER: So you said your mom kind of ruled things at home. Tell me a little about your early memories of her, which would have been sort of late twenties and into the Depression. For instance, did she learn English?

CAPARIS: Yes, she did. My mother, in fact, she'd gone We always joked that we got here at her age. She was born in, I think, 1894. I don't have the exact dates. She'd gone to what we'd call a nursery school now, where

the little girls were sent to this neighbor lady who had them all lined up, and she taught them things in her house. Then she had more schooling. She was educated.

ETTINGER: Yeah, because her family background was a little bit more.

CAPARIS: That's right. My dad wasn't. I don't know, but my dad had a knack for languages. He picked up a number of languages, you know. He was [inaudible]. It's just too bad, but he didn't get a chance.

So she was one of the few educated women here, because most of the women came, came from villages. So there were several others, and they organized what they called Prothos (phonetic), which I think means "progress" in Greek. It's like what they have Filoptomos (phonetic) now, to help anybody that was in need. If one of the old bachelors got very sick, he'd end up in the county hospital down in the wards. I'd never been there, but they would visit him. If he died, they would collect money to bury him. She was the first president of that. Then later, when the archdiocese organized Filoptomos, they took that same type of organization all over, you know.

But she went to school, she went to adult education classes at, I think it was called Stanford Elementary, and she would get involved in everything. We used to laugh. We'd come home and we'd just barely beat her in the door, and she'd have her hat on, starting dinner.

ETTINGER: Even though she had thought she was going to go back to Greece at some point, she very quickly settled in here?

CAPARIS: Yeah. She always wanted to go back. She did go back to visit, but she never went back to live.

ETTINGER: Who were her best friends? Were they other Greek immigrant women, or was it women from the neighborhood?

CAPARIS: Yeah. Well, you know, at that time, they gathered by the area of Greece from which they came. Those from Polyponese kind of grouped together, those from Artumele (phonetic), those from Crete, but they were all an homogenous group, but I mean usually it's somebody from the area that you were from. But her good friends were Mrs. Compogenes (phonetic), and I think she was from Constantinople. She was uneducated. Later, Martha Dimas (phonetic). I'm trying to think of who else. But those were her close friends.

ETTINGER: Did they live in the Oak Park area, too?

CAPARIS: No, in fact, we lived in the suburb. They'd come out and visit us. They'd come in the morning and just stay all day, and the kids would run in the park all day and then they'd visit. It was about a half an hour by streetcar from downtown. The majority, the ones that came, the original ones, they lived around the church, clustered around the church, which was at 620 N Street. They were working people a lot. I think there was a three-story

apartment next door, and they lived in those flats, apartments. So that was a gathering place, was the church.

They had a Greek school, they organized a Greek school, and it was three times a week, Monday, Wednesdays, and Friday, after what we called American school, and there was no option. My mother would She never drove. My father never thought she could drive, you know. She could have done anything. But she'd take us by the hand, and my older brother kicking and screaming, and we'd go down there and we'd be down there for a couple of hours, I guess. That was Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays with the streetcar.

Then my dad's partner would come pick us up and bring us home. We would pick up some of our friends and drop them off, you know, went to P Street, our close friends. She kept us occupied like three days at Greek school. Tuesdays and Thursdays I had piano lessons. Saturdays was dancing lessons. You know, back at the library, the recreation department had classes. It was there my brothers were involved in sports. Everybody was swimming. Then we had the library, which was wonderful.

ETTINGER: In your neighborhood.

CAPARIS: Yeah. She read a lot and we all started from very young to read. I remember anytime anybody was sick, she'd go to the library and ask the librarian for several books, you know, to keep whoever it was busy.

ETTINGER: Now, at the Greek school, they were focused on language, I would think, language and culture. What do you recall about the after-school Greek school lessons?

CAPARIS: Oh, I loved to see my friends. We had Sunday school. But we had two groups of friends. We had our Greek friends, because our mothers would have their Greek friends. Many of the men, most of the men, were working, you know, they all had good businesses, and then the kids would all group together. So we learned the language. We learned religion. We learned the history. I'm trying to think the books that we read in Greek. We didn't know what we were saying, but we read them. But we all learned to speak it, speak the language.

ETTINGER: Did your parents speak Greek to one another at home?

CAPARIS: Oh, yes. I mean we spoke Greek at home. At home we spoke Greek. That was in the house, it's Greek. I tried it with my daughter, and it worked.

ETTINGER: Oh, really?

CAPARIS: Yes.

ETTINGER: You did it all the way up through high school?

CAPARIS: Well, anytime we spoke to my mother, it was in Greek. She understood English. In fact, in the beginning, she even helped us with some of our English homework because when she was going to adult education. But it was Greek at home.

ETTINGER: Now, was the Greek school in the church or the neighboring building?

CAPARIS: The church was a small church, really cute church, right on 620 N Street, and in back of the church was a two-story kind of a Victorian house. The upstairs was living quarters for the priest and his family. Then downstairs they'd opened up the rooms and classes were down there. So the teacher could have several grades at the same time.

ETTINGER: Were the teachers just other parishioners volunteering?

CAPARIS: No, no, they came They were really teachers, you know. If I remember correctly, they made contact with them through the archdiocese in New York. We had teachers, and some of them were pretty strict.

The first one I had was a parish priest, Father Scofis (phonetic), and he was a very sweet man, very nice, you know, very gentle. Then we had another one, if you didn't do something, put your hand out and there's the ruler, you know. But we learned poems. They'd have end-of-the-year graduation, and everybody had to learn a poem, and sometimes they were long.

Then that was kind of the gathering place, like meetings would be held down there. I remember the ladies making candles for church, dipping candles, making candles. What was the last thing? Oh, I think they had their first Greek food festival there many a year later, but on a smaller scale. It had a yard, too. I've got a picture, which is really kind of funny.

ETTINGER: Maybe you can show it to me on our way out, if it's convenient.

CAPARIS: Of the 1938 class.

ETTINGER: Which grade school did you go to, regular school?

CAPARIS: Here?

ETTINGER: Yeah.

CAPARIS: To Bret Harte.

ETTINGER: You said you had two sets of friends, you had your Greek friends and your

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CAPARIS: Yes, and then we had our neighbors and we had our American friends.

ETTINGER: After school on days when you weren't going to Greek school, you were .

..

CAPARIS: Home with my friends here, because there were no Greek friends around here.

ETTINGER: At the time, did that seem strange or odd, or just kind of like two worlds, kind of?

CAPARIS: Not really, because I remember I joined Rainbow Girls with my American friends. When I got to high school I belonged to, next, the public speaking club. They were all my American friends. I played in the band. They were all my American friends. As we got older, we had a dance band, too, with my Greek friends and some American friends, and so it wasn't bad. It wasn't bad. Though we were expected to date Greek boys, you know.

ETTINGER: Tell me about that. Coming up, that was just an expectation?

CAPARIS: Yeah, it was just one of the things that we were expected. No thought put into it, you know, I mean, it just was automatic that when we grew up we were going to marry Greek. At that time, I think everybody in town was spying on us, you know. We felt like it. [laughs] No, we just couldn't get away with it, you know. My mother was not that strict, my father wasn't either, because, I mean, she'd gone to the dancing school. It was a different, different atmosphere with her. But I had friends. Oh, it was just like the Gestapo, you know. So most of us did marry Greek.

ETTINGER: If you didn't, if you picked up a boyfriend or girlfriend in high school, then the word would filter back to your parents that . . .

CAPARIS: Oh, it would. Somebody would call up and say, "Oh, I saw so-and-so, you know, she was at . . ." My dad laughed and my mother. I don't know, maybe having two brothers, we had an open house at our house. My mother never knew how many kids were going to sit there and have dinner with us. They were in and out all the time. My older brother was an athlete. In fact, he became a football coach later at Chico State. But they were all around there, you know.

Then they had an organization for young people. In fact, they had two. You know, the Greeks in those days were divided politically. There were the ones that were for the king and the other were for V____, who was a Democrat. And that was a big thing, because my godfather . . . I didn't tell you about Second Street. That was really interesting.

My dad was at 908 Second Street. Two doors down, there was a coffeehouse like they were in Greece, I found out later, and it was kind of a long narrow, like a storefront in front. They had the Oriental smoking pipes, I remember, lined up there. My godfather and his partner really got along well, and they were pretty shrewd, because on one wall they had the king and the queen and the prince and there would be all the royalists. On the other one, they had V_____ and all his people. I mean they weren't going to placate. But, you know, it lit fires. They felt very strongly about that.

ETTINGER: So you would hear political arguments in the café?

CAPARIS: Oh, yeah, they would argue. I would go down there with my brothers because they used to have this Greek pastry, you know, walk two doors down to my godfather's, and he would always give us pastries. But we were too young to get involved in that, but we'd hear about it, you know. My parents were royalists, but they weren't that diehard political, but that was a big thing in those days.

Then another thing that's amusing is that people were known, like I try to remember, across the street from my dad's place was a little fruit store. I don't know those people's name, but I know they're from Noxis (phonetic), the island of Noxis, and they would call them the Noxiltis (phonetic). I don't remember hearing their name. Down further there was a place where a man sold fish. He had a little fish store, and he was

known by where he was from. Then my dad would say, "Oh, the Cretans down on the corner." You know, they had a little hotel, and then Mr. Parisokis (phonetic), Mr. Paris, his son later became a judge. He died recently here in Sacramento, and he had a big saloon on the corner there. They were the Cretans. They kind of kept together, you know. Then down further there was a secondhand store. There was a coffee shop, where they made coffee, ground coffee. I think they were wholesalers. But there were a lot of businesses down there, and then there was Mr. Mandis (phonetic). He was an educated man. The ones that were educated kind of led the community, the older of the men. He had a nice hotel.

But they were all in that general area and grouped around the church. That's why we loved to go down there, because all our friends would be down there, you know. Then after church, we'd go to Hart's cafeteria on K Street, our group, and go to the movies. We'd get on the streetcar and we'd go home and they'd walk home.

ETTINGER: Tell me, what was your godfather's name?

CAPARIS: Kumbid (phonetic) was his last name. Anastasi Kumbid (phonetic). He went back to Greece. Oh, and they always gambled a little bit, too.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

ETTINGER: Okay.

CAPARIS: I should tell you more about my godfather and his partner. My godfather went back to home. He never came back. He was a little old bachelor. His partner got married, came back, brought his wife, and they had one child and then he died. This was during Prohibition, too. So they would serve a cognac with their coffee.

But they had a parrot, and I remember the parrot, because when my grandfather left, I wanted his parrot so bad, but my mom and dad said, "No, no, no. They carry diseases. You don't want a parrot." The parrot would be hanging in a cage outside of the coffeehouse, and he recognized the cops, and he used a slang word for cops. They called my godfather by a nickname. They called him "Camboodie" (phonetic), which meant he hunched over, you know, like a hunchback. He'd say, "Camboodie, Camboodie," he'd say, "the bazi (phonetic) are coming, the bazi. Camboodie, bazi," telling him the cops are here, you know. It was a big joke.

ETTINGER: That is so funny. So your godfather ran the coffee shop?

CAPARIS: With his partner.

ETTINGER: It was just a few doors down from the church?

CAPARIS: No, no. The church was at Sixth and N. This was the Second Street one. A lot of little Greek businesses.

ETTINGER: Your dad's hotel was also on Second Street?

CAPARIS: On Second Street, the last, the one I remember.

ETTINGER: So your dad got to know this gentleman as another . . .

CAPARIS: Oh, yeah, they all knew each other. They all knew each other, you know. They were all friends.

Then there's the Maritsis (phonetic) family, Palmer Maritsis. He was a labor contractor. He would get men and take them out on jobs. He was later my brother Paul's godfather, named after him.

Then there were the people that farmed in the community, outside around Woodland, in Lincoln, all those families. In Roseville they worked on the railroad. But they all would come into Sacramento. This is where the church was. This was the center. They had an organization. The men organized that. I imagine it was Mr. Mantis (phonetic) and several others that were educated men. It was called Elpees (phonetic). Elpees means "hope." They took care of things that needed to take care of. If anybody was in trouble, you know, ill or whatever, they looked out. It was the primary organization in town.

ETTINGER: It was a fraternal organization?

CAPARIS: Yes, fraternal organization. Then I don't know what happened, when that faded. I think that faded out when GAPA and AHEPA came in, the two national organizations.

ETTINGER: Was your father real active in that organization?

CAPARIS: My father was not active in it. He belonged, but he was not active. He was too busy. He never had time to do anything like that. My mother was the one that was involved in everything.

ETTINGER: You mentioned earlier that the education level sometimes related to leadership in the community.

CAPARIS: Yes.

ETTINGER: Was that part of it a little bit, your father was a very good businessman but not . . .

CAPARIS: No, it wasn't that in his case. He was not a joiner, not interested in anything like that. Because there were other men that didn't have much in the way of education that were very active and did a lot of wonderful things in town.

ETTINGER: That organization sounds a little bit like the Prodos (phonetic) one.

CAPARIS: Yeah, Prodos was the women. Then later on, if you look at [inaudible] and I remember my mother was very active in Filoptomas, too. She was president one time. She was secretary forever, it seemed like. Someone would die and they would call her from the hospital. They'd go down there and arrange for the burial. I remember one time they didn't have clothes to bury them, and they'd take clothes from their home, you know, to bury them.

ETTINGER: Let's talk about the church for a second. It sounds very much like it was pretty central.

CAPARIS: Oh, it was wonderful.

ETTINGER: Tell me a little bit about the church and the first priests that you can recall, a little bit about them.

CAPARIS: Well, the first one that I really can recall is Father Scofis. The church was a small church, but everybody loved it. I was in the choir with the rest of my friends upstairs, and the men would sit on one side and the women on the other side. Everybody was involved in it. I mean hands-on. I mean when it came to Easter, our mothers would take us down there and we'd decorate the tomb of Christ with flowers. You know, they were doing it and we'd be running around playing.

In those days, in the early days, weddings and baptisms weren't so much held in the church. Maybe it was out on somebody's farm, and everybody would gather together and celebrate, or in a house. Later on, it got so that everybody. . . . I don't know whether some priest came and said, "You know, this is the way it's going to be," and they started getting married in the church. But it was a gathering place, and everybody loved to go down there. I mean that was the center, that was the center of life, for the Greeks was that church. People from Marysville would come on holy days, from Lincoln, from Roseville. Let's see, where else around here? Not Lodi; no, Lodi, they usually went to Stockton. I don't know. I don't remember people from Lodi coming; maybe a few.

ETTINGER: What were the really big events in the year, the church year?

CAPARIS: Easter, very big event. I mean there was church services every night before Easter. Fasting was a big thing, you know. They really had us fasting.

ETTINGER: The whole Lent season?

CAPARIS: Oh, we ate so much peanut butter, our tongues stuck to the roofs of our mouths, because kids don't like a lot of other things, you know. That meant, I mean there was strict fasting. Holy Week, nobody ate any meat. But I mean there was no meat, no eggs, no butter, no cheese, no milk. But they made soup with rice and tomato, and we just went along with it. Like I say, a lot of peanut butter, peanut butter and jelly.

Then on Good Friday, I remember the women wouldn't cook. They never put a pot on the stove. It was just whatever you can pick on. They'd go down to the church and help decorate the tomb of Christ, put flowers on it.

ETTINGER: That was part inside the church, it was one of the . . .

CAPARIS: In the church, that's right. It took them a half day to do that. Then there was service in the evening, and then there was service on Sunday night at midnight; Christ Is Risen. Of course, I don't remember too much of that because they wouldn't take us. We were kind of young to . . .

ETTINGER: For the midnight service or early morning service?

CAPARIS: Yeah, until we got older. Then Sunday there were picnics on different farms, you know. Everybody'd go out. They had friends that farmed.

They'd roast a whole lamb and celebrate the whole day, which was wonderful. We'd always go to Lincoln. We had friends there. But we all took part in it. It was a very close community.

ETTINGER: Outside of the holidays, not Easter, was there just one service on Sunday or were there . . .

CAPARIS: One service.

ETTINGER: What time was that?

CAPARIS: We didn't have a second priest.

ETTINGER: What time was that?

CAPARIS: I can't remember, but probably about ten.

ETTINGER: So you guys all got scrubbed and went down there?

CAPARIS: Yeah. Or maybe we went earlier, probably, and you can imagine my mother tracking all my brothers, "Come on, get ready, let's go," and dragging his feet. We had to go down there for Sunday school, so maybe we might have left at nine or so, because it took a half hour to get down there, get to K Street, and then we walked to N Street.

ETTINGER: Your father would drive on Sundays, or you took the streetcar?

CAPARIS: No, he worked. The business ran then. When he went to church on holy days or Sunday, he'd get there early. My mother would say he got there before the priest could open the church, you know. Then my brothers were altar boys. Most of the boys were expected to be altar boys. The girls were members of the choir.

Oh, I remember something funny, because the collection plate then was nickels and dimes. There was a little grocery store on the corner, and everybody would stop there at Pete's and make change to donate.

ETTINGER: To be able to make a contribution to the church.

CAPARIS: Yeah, yeah, because they didn't know how else. Then when they built the church, in fact in that book you probably have seen it. It came out on the fiftieth anniversary. The ones that were in business all contributed something, and I think maybe the biggest contributions were a thousand dollars, which was a lot of money in those days, you know.

ETTINGER: How long was that church in service, and when did they move the church?

CAPARIS: I can't remember exactly, but it had to be sometime in the fifties because I was married in that church in '47. But it had to be in the fifties. I've got the book. I probably could check in there.

ETTINGER: Oh, that's okay. I was just . . .

CAPARIS: Yeah. I can't remember.

ETTINGER: But it was through the thirties and forties at that church.

CAPARIS: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, through the forties. It had to be in the fifties.

ETTINGER: It's really interesting to hear about these connections between the farmers on the outskirts.

CAPARIS: Oh, yeah. They could come in. Many of them were old bachelors, you know, on the farms. But you'd go out there, and like in Lincoln, they raised turkeys. That was their big thing. In Yuba City, the peach

orchards, peaches. In Woodland, I don't know what they did in Woodland, to tell you the truth. We would go to Capay. I remember there were some people there that had a . . . Some men, again, old bachelors.

ETTINGER: I guess about the time that you were born or thereafter there, there had a lot of continued immigration into the community but by the late 1920s, 1930s?

CAPARIS: Not too much, no. No. In fact, I don't remember, except for two or three. I don't remember immigration when I was young, people coming at that point. Maybe. I don't know why. Not a lot of turnover, either, from people coming from the East Coast or people coming from other areas.

ETTINGER: Since you grew up during the Depression, tell me a little bit about your memories of that and its impact on your parents. I know, among other things, it meant they couldn't go back to Greece. But tell me a little about that.

CAPARIS: Well, I remember when my dad finally gave up the hotel on Second Street, because by then there was so many men coming in that had nothing. You know, they weren't working and the government was providing. . . . I don't know. It was some kind of a program where they could eat there. But they gave it up. They started this new hotel, which was a more upscale hotel, and their coffee shop on the corner.

ETTINGER: Where was the new one? You told me, but I forgot the new one.

CAPARIS: The State Hotel on Fourth and I Street. State Hotel and Restaurant. The coffee shop was on the corner, then the rest, the hotel, was upstairs. I remember people coming. Oh, in the beginning I remember that it was on almost a barter system, you know, like how could you operate a business without a penny? I mean your bank accounts were frozen. You had no access to anything except what was in the cash register, but everybody else was in the same boat. So I remember the people that owned. . . . There was a family that owned a bakery, the Lagatis (phonetic) family, which was a prominent family in town. I think it was kind of like on the barter system, you know. I'll give you this, you give me that, and that's how people got by. It didn't hit California bad because you could always grow vegetables in your yard. You could do something.

But not like it did on the West Coast compared to things I've heard where people worked in factories. Factories closed. There was nothing they could do. Then some people from there started coming out here where they had relatives. There was several families I remember. But I don't remember that it. . . . Well, I don't know. Somehow people got along, you know. But in those days not many people owned their own homes either, you know. They were renting. There were a few that owned their own homes. How they got by, I don't know. But the man would either have a shoeshine stand or he'd be a barber. That's the way we. . . . The ones that weren't in business, you know. There were a lot of

little fruit stands, fruit store. They seemed to get by, and you didn't feel it because nobody else had. Everybody was in the same boat. You know, you got a new pair of shoes for Easter and a new pair of shoes for Christmas, but so did everybody else. So you didn't feel any different.

Then before the Depression was over, my dad, they lost their business, and they couldn't hang onto it any longer.

ETTINGER: The State Hotel?

CAPARIS: Yes. But he wasn't well at that time. He started to get sick, so he worked with his nephew who had been running the hotel.

ETTINGER: What was his name?

CAPARIS: Tom Paramanis (phonetic). He lived in Elk Grove. He went to Elk Grove and he started a business there. So he worked with him for a while, but my dad didn't work very long after that. He didn't live very long after that. He was sick.

ETTINGER: What year did he die?

CAPARIS: He died in '44.

ETTINGER: So got rid of the State Hotel in the end of the thirties?

CAPARIS: I can't remember when it was. I must have been the end of the thirties, because by then he wasn't well.

ETTINGER: Was he at home?

CAPARIS: Yes. Yes.

ETTINGER: Was that a hardship economically for your family?

CAPARIS: Not really, because just before the war started, a lot of the women went to work. It was like a status thing, you know. "We're helping in the war effort." They went to work, so women that had never worked and their husbands would never let them work before.

My mother went to work at the Bon Marche, which is on 11th and K Street, and it was the most exclusive store in town, women's dress shop in town. She worked as a seamstress, and she really didn't know, because she came home the first day and said, "How do you put a zipper in?" She'd gone with another friend. I think it was Martha Dimas. Her husband was a baker, and I think they lost their bakery. I can't remember. Martha went to work there, and someone, another friend of hers, too, I think.

Then some of the other women went to work to help. We always had a group of women that worked in the cannery that had to work, the entire time. I mean their husbands didn't have a business.

ETTINGER: Worked shoeshine or something like that?

CAPARIS: Right, and they worked in the canneries, which was hard work. It was terrible for them.

ETTINGER: So this was the working-class members of the Greek community were working all along.

CAPARIS: Yeah. But, no, it didn't, because by then I was working by then.

ETTINGER: You worked?

CAPARIS: Yeah. It wasn't that big a problem. We owned our own home. It was paid for. Taxes were nothing, hardly anything. We didn't feel it. I mean, I don't know.

ETTINGER: Where did you go to high school and what year did you start?

CAPARIS: I went to Sacramento High School, and I graduated in '39, so I would have gone in '37.

ETTINGER: Both '37 and '38, three years?

CAPARIS: '37, three years.

ETTINGER: You liked music?

CAPARIS: Oh yeah, I liked music and I liked journalism, and that was going to be my field, but they didn't pay anything in those days.

ETTINGER: When you were in high school, what were you thinking about after high school? Were you thinking about going into journalism?

CAPARIS: I wanted to go into journalism. I was the editor of my school paper, society editor, editor. I mean I loved it. That's what I was going to do. then I checked with the [*Sacramento*] *Bee*, and they were paying nothing. Then I didn't think about it. I went into City College and took I just a federal exam, just for the heck of it, and the state one. I was hired. They just wanted a temporary, and I thought, "This is great. I'll work Christmas vacation, you know. I'll work there a month."

Well, after the month was over, they said, "How would you like to come permanently?"

So I thought, "Oh, this is fantastic." I was making \$105 a month.

ETTINGER: This was a state office or federal?

CAPARIS: Federal. Oh, the state was paying seventy, sixty dollars a month. You know, I had friends that never went to college; they just went directly to high school. That's what they were making. Well, gee, I was making real money, was even shopping at the Bon Marche, you know. So I thought, "Well, I'll do it for a little longer." Well, that's it, you know. I never did go back. I worked for Social Security, ended up sending a lot of those bachelors back to Greece.

ETTINGER: How so?

CAPARIS: Because by then they had worked enough to earn money to get a small pension, and, see, they're allowed to draw that pension in Greece. But then the fun started with trying to establish their age, and nobody knew how old they were really, you know. The men had an advantage over the women, because there's compulsory military training in Greece, and so when a male child is born, he has to be registered, to this day. So that would give them a year, because it would be as a first. Well, with my Greek, too, I was able to become an official translator and an interpreter.

ETTINGER: For Social Security?

CAPARIS: Yeah. For the western states, I guess, yeah. So they'd send me documents and stuff to translate and then I acted as an interpreter. So we would write to the American consulate in Greece, see if we could get a m____, a male birth record for this person. If they could, they would get that for us. But then we had to establish a month of birth, at least, and everybody was born either the 25th of March, which was the liberation of Greece from Turkey, or the 15th of August, which is a big holiday in our church and the virgin. So, you know, it's kind of strange.

ETTINGER: Why is that? So that was just the dates?

CAPARIS: Because so they didn't know and they just picked those dates, and everybody picked the same day. It was kind of funny, because there was a new attorney in town, Tom Lauris (phonetic). He's gone now, but he was older than I was. But he was awfully good to help a lot of these men, so he'd call me and say, "We've got another one," and sent him over. So between us, we . . .

ETTINGER: This would have been during in the late forties or the mid forties or fifties?

CAPARIS: Well, it would have to be in the forties, after the war was over, yeah.

ETTINGER: So you graduated high school in '39. Is that right, you graduated high school in '39?

CAPARIS: '39, and then I went to City College for two years, yeah.

ETTINGER: What were your parents expecting? Were they expecting you to get married soon?

CAPARIS: My parents expected everybody to go on, and I mean with my mother there was just no question about it, you know. They didn't push me as much, you know, because I knew what I wanted to do and I was the oldest and I kind of got away with things, you know that.

But like my oldest brother, Gus, he was a good football player. He played in high school. He might have gone. . . . I don't remember whether he went to junior college at all, but he went into the service. They all, three of them, enlisted in the Air Force. He enlisted in the Air Force, and they shipped him over right away. He was with the 8th Air Force in Ireland during the war. Then when he came back, he went to [University of California] Berkeley and he graduated from Berkeley. He played football there. In fact, one year they went to the Rose Bowl. Then from there he got his master's there, and he got a job as a football coach at Yuba College for a couple years, and then at Chico, became a coach at Chico. But he died at thirty-four. He had a heart attack.

But then my brother John, he was in the Air Force, too, but that was after the war because they were younger, the two younger boys. He became a surveyor, but he got married very young. He got married as soon as he got back from the service.

But my brother Paul was the one that had an interesting career. He went to U.C. Berkeley, too, and then he went to Harvard [University], and he was a history major. Then after Harvard, he was at Dumbarton Oaks

for a while. I think he was working on his Ph.D. at the time. But when he was there, Senator William Nolan was in Washington, from Sacramento, and he asked him if he wanted the job as his assistant. So he dropped Dumbarton Oaks and he went to Washington, so he was there with the senator the entire time.

Then the senator came back from California, they owned the *Oakland Tribune*, and Paul worked for him there. He was the youngest executive editor of a newspaper in the States at that time, and he was the editor of the paper until. . . . In fact, that was funny. I studied journalism; he gets to work for a newspaper until they sold the newspaper.

ETTINGER: Now, keeping their ages, were they all roughly a couple years apart?

CAPARIS: No. Gus and I were like He was born in '23, but then John was '25 and Paul was '28.

ETTINGER: So Gus is the only one that served during World War II in the service?

CAPARIS: Actually, yeah. Paul was in the army. He served in the service too, but he was in the Army Language School in Monterey.

ETTINGER: During the war?

CAPARIS: No. No, he wouldn't have been, because, let's see, '28, '29. Well, they had to go in, yeah.

ETTINGER: One ended up in the Oakland area, living there.

CAPARIS: He was in Piedmont, yeah.

ETTINGER: The other brother, John?

CAPARIS: John lives in Fair Oaks. Then Gus was up in Chico, and that's when he died. Some little Boy Scout was lost, and they got all the staff there to go look for him, above Willows, and he just keeled over. An athlete all his live, never been sick a day in his life.

ETTINGER: Was your mother still alive?

CAPARIS: Yes, yes.

ETTINGER: She'd been widowed in '44?

CAPARIS: '44.

ETTINGER: When did Gus die?

CAPARIS: He died in— Let's see. Were we here when this happened? In '57.

ETTINGER: Did your mother keep living in Oak Park after your father died, or did she move?

CAPARIS: No. What she did, after my brother Gus died, she went to live with his widow. She moved down here, Ann moved down here, and they had three children, three small children. The oldest was six. So she stayed with them until the children were old enough.

ETTINGER: So she had sort of second set of kids to raise, help raise.

CAPARIS: She did. She did. That was very sad at that time.

ETTINGER: Tell me a little bit about your high school social life, high school into college. Were you dating? We talked earlier about the mafia keeping the Greek Tell me a little bit about your social life in high school.

CAPARIS: Well, most of us weren't dating. We ran around in groups mostly. But I mean I went to my junior prom, I went to my senior ball, and I belonged to Rainbow Girls. We had formal dances, we had things, and I went with dates, and they weren't all Greek boys, you know. My folks weren't that strict about that. There were clubs there, and somehow we were always involved in everything, you know, just with the music. I played a soprano sax, can you believe it?

ETTINGER: In a dance band, did you say?

CAPARIS: No, that was in the marching band, the high school band. No, I played the piano in the dance band.

ETTINGER: Was that at high school?

CAPARIS: That was when we were in high school yet, and there's just a group of us got together. This one fellow was a really good organizer. I remember he played an alto sax. There was another gal that played the piano, too. We alternated with anybody that could play an instrument. We played at Mickey Mouse on Saturday a couple of times. They used to have a Mickey Mouse program on Saturday, a show at the Alhambra. So they asked us to play. We played at a wedding, too, *a* wedding. It was fun.

We had a club that we belonged to. There was Nu Gamma and Alpha Beta for the boys, and we had formal dances and picnics and stuff. There was a lot of activity going on.

ETTINGER: Where did you meet your husband?

CAPARIS: Oh, my husband. Well, I met him here in Sacramento. He was a marine engineer and he was from Greece. He had quite a history, because he'd been torpedoed twice and then when he went back to Greece, they tried to escape to go to Egypt and the Germans caught him and he was in a German prison camp. In fact, I saw this picture with his prison garb on, and then when he escaped with these other two fellows, there was no place to go. They had to go up in the mountains, so they were in the underground for a while until the war ended. Then when the war was over, he just shipped out again and came here.

In the meantime, they took them into the American Merchant Marine because they needed native crews, and they were bringing back war brides. Then there was a strike on the East Coast, and he came out here thinking that he'd ship out from California. By the time he got here, the maritime strike was on here. Someone told him, well, he could get a part-time job maybe working for. . . . They think if you're an engineer, you can do anything. They said, "Maybe you can go help. There's this large taxi cab company, Yellow Cab Company," which my cousin owned that. Cabs were a big thing in those days.

ETTINGER: What was your cousin's name who owned the cab company?

CAPARIS: Teddy Pappas. So he went to work for him. My brother John, the one that [inaudible], would always be hanging around there working in his time

off, working. He called up and he said, "There's a young man here and he doesn't know anybody, doesn't have any friends. Can I bring him over?"

Our house was always open, so he brought him over, and I met him and [inaudible]. He never did say how he became a real estate man. He was in real estate for many years until he died.

ETTINGER: Now, I don't know if we got his name on tape.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

ETTINGER: You left off when you met your husband, so can you just tell a little bit more about how you go from meeting him to marrying him? Did he court you and . . .

CAPARIS: Oh yes. Well, he came over, and I was really upset that my brother should do that to me, because I was busy sewing something. In those days, everybody sewed; all the gals, you know. So I had spread this fabric on the living room floor, and I was cutting on the floor. Here my brother comes home with a good-looking guy, you know. But I was kind of thin at that time. But he was very charming to my mother. Europeans are very charming, you know. He said, "Can I come over again and visit?"

She said, "Yes, you can." And came over a few times. We went out. My mother wasn't too excited. She said, "You know, European men are a lot different than what you're used to here, and we don't know anything about this young man." Well, things just warmed up more.

Well, she found out and she wrote to Greece and said, "Check this out.

Who is he?"

ETTINGER: Because she still had relatives back there.

CAPARIS: Yes, she did. So my aunt went and visited his mother.

ETTINGER: Oh, really?

CAPARIS: Oh, yeah, she wasn't taking anything for granted.

ETTINGER: Where was he from, what region?

CAPARIS: Well, originally from the island of Pathos (phonetic). He came from a very well-to-do family. His dad owned a lot of property in P____. What his dad did, he brought wine and he had these little kiyikia (phonetic), these small boats that went to the islands and got the must, brought it into Piraeus and manufactured it into wine and into other liquor. He owned a lot of property on the island, too.

They were all involved with the sea, really. I mean, in fact, his father, he died during the occupation, and when they took his remains for burial at the end, they had a mine and he was lost, lost at sea. His remains were lost at sea with his oldest son, who was taking him back for burial.

ETTINGER: So she went and she checked up on his family.

CAPARIS: Oh, yeah. She asked who they were and, I guess, got a good report.

ETTINGER: Then your mom warmed up to the idea?

CAPARIS: Then she warmed up to the idea, but, you know, she said, "There's a big difference. I mean, you've been raised different." But, see, he traveled a

lot, you know, so it wasn't that he hadn't been exposed to others, so it wasn't as bad as she thought it would be.

ETTINGER: Do you think she was worried about, when she was saying, "raised different," men in Europe, do you think she had in mind that he was going to be too forceful or too domineering of a husband?

CAPARIS: Probably that. Yeah, maybe that, too. Then there's another thing, too. You know, in Europe things are different, because I've stayed there a lot. The men always had a girlfriend on the side. There's always that hanky-panky going on, you know. Where here it's not that prevalent. Now, you, you probably know more about that than I do, but I don't. So, you know, there was that. She wasn't sure I would and whether I would want to go back there to live. But he didn't insist on that.

I remember when he retired. The first time we went back there was in 1956, and we stayed for six months at that time, and I met his mother and his family. One brother was a sea captain. He would come sail here. He would call us and we'd go down and visit him, you know. Another brother was in the merchant marine, too. They were islanders. They're all seagoing people.

ETTINGER: That's very interesting.

CAPARIS: Yeah. So I really enjoyed it. I had a wonderful time. Then twenty years later when he retired, he went back there and he inherited property. They all did from their father because he was pretty, pretty a shrewd man. And

bought an apartment, condominium, in Piraeus, so we went back there every year. We'd go back there in about March and not come back till about October. So it was wonderful.

ETTINGER: You were married in 1947, is that what you said, at the church?

CAPARIS: Pardon?

ETTINGER: At the old church?

CAPARIS: Oh, yeah, the old church.

ETTINGER: You said at this point they were doing weddings in the church by the priest.

CAPARIS: Yes. It was in August and it was hot. One of my bridesmaids fainted. I mean, no air conditioning, you know, you just It was pretty miserable.

ETTINGER: Was there a lot of people there?

CAPARIS: Yeah, quite a few. Quite a few. Then we had our reception in the Odd Fellows Hall downtown.

ETTINGER: Where did you guys set up house?

CAPARIS: The first house we had was a flat at 21st and E Street, the two-story. It's still there, the two flats, an old-fashioned flat, which was like it had two bedrooms and a sleeping porch and a big living room and a big dining room with sliding doors in the kitchen. We needed the bedrooms, too, because every time a Greek ship came into port, you know, they'd come over and stay with us.

ETTINGER: I see he still had a lot of friends.

CAPARIS: I mean it was open house at that house. My husband liked people and he liked to have people around.

ETTINGER: He went into real estate.

CAPARIS: He went into real estate. How he went into real estate was he worked for this engineering company when he came after he stayed in Sacramento, after we got married. Then he met this man who said, "Well, why don't we buy and get this service station on 21st and L Street, go in partnership in it." The other fellow was a marine engineer, too, who married my cousin, so they were thinking of going into business together. Well, he had that for a while, but it wasn't his thing, and this real estate man said he would sell it for him. Well, the real estate man talked him into going into real estate. I think he must have been the second one in the city of the Greeks that went into real estate. There was one man earlier. I remember him.

ETTINGER: The man who recruited him or talked him into going into real estate wasn't Greek?

CAPARIS: No, no, no, no, no. No. My husband just, I remember, we studied together for his real estate license. He picked up English very fast because he had to get his license to do that, so I mean, after all, and then he did and he was great. He was a people person, you know, so he did all right.

ETTINGER: That's a good business to be in.

CAPARIS: Yeah, it is. Oh, it has its ups and downs, you know, like now it's going to go down one of these years. Can't keep stay the way it is. That was his second career.

ETTINGER: I forgot to ask you. I want to keep talking a little bit more about your own life, but did your father and your mother naturalize as citizens?

CAPARIS: Yes, both of them.

ETTINGER: Did they do it really early on? When, about, did your father do it? Do you know if it was before he went back and married your mother?

CAPARIS: No. He did it after. My dad did it much later, much later. I think my mother did it before my dad did.

ETTINGER: Was that an issue in the Greek community? I know in communities of immigrants where they intend to go back, many of them, for a while, they sometimes delay becoming citizens.

CAPARIS: Well, I really don't know. I couldn't answer that. I don't know. But I mean, it wasn't at the top of their priority, so maybe it was because they intended to go back. I'm sure a lot of those bachelors were never naturalized, because they intended to go back.

ETTINGER: Your husband naturalized?

CAPARIS: Oh, yeah, as soon as he could.

ETTINGER: Soon after you were married or as soon as he could.

CAPARIS: Yeah.

ETTINGER: After the war was there a little resurgence of immigration? In other words, were Greeks starting to come in the fifties?

CAPARIS: Oh, yeah, people would start coming because they had really suffered during the war. It was really bad, and especially in the cities, really, really suffered.

ETTINGER: So the migration, the Greeks coming to this community in the fifties, then, were more almost refugees or refugees?

CAPARIS: Yeah, people brought whole families. I remember the Genulius (phonetic) family here. They brought a whole family. I mean a mother and a father and the kids. A lot of people did that, they brought their whole family over.

ETTINGER: Which was unusual, because the first migration had all been bachelors that went back, right?

CAPARIS: Yes. No, they brought whole families.

ETTINGER: How did they settle into the community?

CAPARIS: Like I know about the Genuliuses, I mean they found a house for them, they put it in there, they helped them get going. The kids went to school. The father would get some kind of The mothers usually couldn't speak the language. I mean the men did, but the men always managed to get some kind of work. Somebody would help them get a job, and they all did well and the kids went on to school, you know, because education seemed to be a priority.

Like in my group, there was a group ahead of older ones that were born before the twenties, and of those, I don't know how many went on to college. But Tom Morris did. There were about four or five of them, I guess. In my age group again, I think it had a lot to do with whether their parents had the education whether they pushed them. Some of them pushed them because they wanted the kids to have more, and some, I guess, didn't. They sort of left it up to the kids. But I knew that some of my group never went to college. Could have been the Depression, too, people who had to go to work right away.

ETTINGER: Right, especially older children going to contribute. When you first working, you were still living at home.

CAPARIS: Oh, yeah, I lived home till I got married. Nobody moved out before they got married.

ETTINGER: Especially women, I guess.

CAPARIS: Yes. But I really wasn't helping. I don't remember helping with my wages. I remember spending it.

ETTINGER: You kept your own wages.

CAPARIS: Yeah. My folks never asked me for any money.

ETTINGER: But they were paying. Their house was paid for, yeah?

CAPARIS: They were. Oh, I mean they were okay. We didn't. I can't tell you . . . I mean, no, I don't know of anybody that went hungry in Sacramento of the group. I don't know of anybody that really went without anything. I

know that the people that didn't have really much to start with would depend on the county hospital for medical aid, but we never did that. We had our doctor, Dr. Jones, for a hundred years until he died, you know. So I don't know personally what went on in some of those families.

ETTINGER: That corridor, that neighborhood on Second Street with your father's hotel and the coffee shop and these things you said, did that persist? For how long did that stay kind of a Greek . . .

CAPARIS: Well, I think it just fell apart after the war started, or after. They were the older men, they and the ones that originated. Many of them weren't married. Now, this one concentration, there were Cretans there, the ones, Mr. Paras was on the corner with that big saloon. Upstairs there was some. . . . Parisokis, I can't remember. They were Cretan names, anyway. There was a family that had a little hotel there. Now, those girls both became attorneys, very good family, I mean, but gradually they all left. It just sort of fell apart, you know, with the Depression.

ETTINGER: There weren't more immigrants coming in and these were mostly bachelors.

CAPARIS: Yeah. It just became pretty seedy down there.

ETTINGER: So when you were a child, that was the place to go. It was a place that you might spend some time there?

CAPARIS: I'd feel comfortable.

ETTINGER: By the end of the 1930s, it's not really a site for the . . .

CAPARIS: No, no.

ETTINGER: There's really just the church.

CAPARIS: Yeah, it was just the church. The church was a different story, you know.

ETTINGER: Did you start a family after the war?

CAPARIS: No. My daughter was adopted. We had no children; adopted my daughter in '52.

ETTINGER: What's her name?

CAPARIS: Georgia. Gia.

ETTINGER: Where were you living then, in '52?

CAPARIS: Here.

ETTINGER: In this house here?

CAPARIS: Oh, no, we were living on Fruitridge. Did I say '52? I'm really getting kooky. She was born in '54. No, we adopted her in '56. Correct that please.

ETTINGER: That's okay. You'll get to see this.

CAPARIS: We were living in Fruitridge. That was our first house.

ETTINGER: In Fruitridge?

CAPARIS: Yeah, on Velma Way. Then we were there about six years, I guess, and then we came here. '56. So we moved here in '57. We were in Greece in '56, came back in the end of '56, bought this house in '57.

ETTINGER: The six months you spent in Greece in 1956, was that all vacation or was it kind of looking . . .

CAPARIS: Oh, it was all a vacation. It was wonderful because Greece was so wonderful then. Of course, it was right after the war and all the bullets and that. We were staying in Athens, and all the buildings were pockmarked with bullet holes, but it was so wonderful because there'd be taverns on the street and they'd be singing at night and you could hear it, and very few cars on the streets. It was just a dream world, really. We stayed on the island in my husband's grandmother's house.

ETTINGER: This was your first time to Greece?

CAPARIS: First time, yeah.

ETTINGER: Had your mother gone back to visit?

CAPARIS: No. Wait a minute. Did she go before I did? She was there when I went. Wait a minute. She might have gone back a year. She stayed, went back and stayed about a year.

ETTINGER: After your father died.

CAPARIS: No, she went the year before.

ETTINGER: After your father died, she went back.

CAPARIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ETTINGER: To visit her sister and her surviving kids?

CAPARIS: She only had a niece at that point. Her brother had died.

ETTINGER: But tell me more about your visit.

CAPARIS: We stayed with my mother-in-law, and my husband had always kept in touch with all his friends, and they were just a great bunch, partying.

We'd take a trip to such-and-such an island or such-and-such a town, and so I learned how they lived, you know. Then we stayed on the island of Pathos. We stayed there for about a month, which was an experience because my mother-in-law's house was this big old two-story house right on the bay and the water lapped up against. I mean, the foundations went out like this, and the walls were about this thick. The windowsills are that thick, you know. But it didn't have a bathroom. We didn't know where it was for a while. There was an outhouse built on the outside.

It was interesting because they had barriers against pirates, you know, going down those little old streets. Their doors, like their house had big iron bars, and when you close the door, you put a bar on the inside. Interesting thing about that house is the kitchen was here, and it was built right on the middle of this little street. So I know when the man would come to sell vegetables or something in a cart, he'd knock on the door and say, "Can I go through your kitchen and go out the other door?" But I enjoyed it. I mean, it was interesting.

ETTINGER: You were meeting a bunch of relatives at this time. You were the Yankee bride.

CAPARIS: Oh, yeah, I had a lot of them. See, my father-in-law was from that island and my mother-in-law was from that island, and she had seven brothers, no sisters. My father-in-law had relatives. So I mean we were just having . . . Oh, I loved it. I mean, they were all so wonderful to me.

ETTINGER: I want to drop back for a second and talk about something you'd mentioned earlier, that the organizations in the Greek community that your mother was involved with and the fraternal organizations, you mentioned earlier that at a later time they kind of got replaced by the national AHEPA and the GAPA. Can you talk a little bit about if you were involved with them or a little bit about that?

CAPARIS: With GAPA or the other?

ETTINGER: Either one, yeah.

CAPARIS: Yeah. Well, GAPA, my mother belonged to GAPA and she was active in it. So they added the junior orders where they had the Nu Gamma N____, the new generation. So how we were going to present that? So we just new Nu and Agama from [inaudible]. The boys were [Greek phrase]. So that became Alpha Beta.

So we'd have meetings and we'd have picnics and we'd have a big ball each year on Valentine's Day. Then we'd visit in other areas, like we'd go to Fresno or we'd go to San Francisco to their dances. They would come to ours. They were general mixers. We met young people from all over.

ETTINGER: This is when you were in high school we're talking about?

CAPARIS: Yeah.

ETTINGER: Your mother belonged, but your family belonged to this.

CAPARIS: Yeah, we all did, I mean. Now, the AHEPA, around here they weren't as strong as the GAPA, but their folks were very strong, you know. When the Greeks get something in their mind, it's either the Royalists or the Democrats, you know, and so because their parents belonged to AHEPA, they wouldn't allow their children to join us, you know. Because I had a couple of good friends, and we were friends, but they didn't belong because their parents didn't belong to the other.

ETTINGER: You were supposed to belong to one or the other.

CAPARIS: To one or the other.

ETTINGER: What was the distinction? Was it between Royalists and Democrats? Was it class?

CAPARIS: No. You know what I think the difference was? GAPA, they were trying to retain the Greek culture through language more so. The AHEPAns were more into integration to learn the English language to get involved. That was the difference.

ETTINGER: So from your mom's point of view, her interests lay with preserving the . . .

CAPARIS: Yes, that's where her friends were. She liked that.

ETTINGER: Did you join or were you still active with that after you got married?

CAPARIS: Oh, I've joined both of them. Many years later, because my neighbors on this street where AHEPA, and I joined them after I got married and they

were AHEPA, but I was with GAPA and I still belong to GAPA. I went to a luncheon yesterday. I still belong to AHEPA, too.

ETTINGER: Were you active in them? Was this part of your life?

CAPARIS: Yeah. I've been president of both, you know. So that isn't the thing anymore. I think both of those organizations have . . . I mean their time has passed, GAPA particularly, you know. But we're reviving it like the second generation because it's fun. We talk about where our folks lived, kind of a party thing. AHEPA still carries a little more weight. They support politicians. They do [inaudible], but even that has . . . Like look at the Elks, look at all these other organizations. Who belongs to them anymore? I mean they're past. Young people aren't interested in that sort of thing.

ETTINGER: Your daughter you adopted, was she an infant?

CAPARIS: Yes, she was. We adopted her in Greece.

ETTINGER: Okay. Oh, neat. When you were there in 1956?

CAPARIS: No. We did it by proxy in '57 before we got there. My mother had adopted, did it for us. Then Mom just stayed with us for one and then she brought her back here while we stayed the remaining months there.

ETTINGER: So then when you came back from your trip, your mother had brought her here.

CAPARIS: My mother had her here.

ETTINGER: Well, let's talk a little about the idea we just talked about with GAPA of preserving the heritage. How important was it to you and to your husband that your daughter be brought up aware of the Greek heritage?

CAPARIS: Well, I think it was more important to me then. I was the one that was putting my foot down and said, "We're speaking," because he was anxious to learn English, see, he needed to perfect his English, and I was saying, "No, she's got to learn Greek. As long as we're [inaudible] she's a very bright girl, we're speaking Greek in the house." So that's it. She went along with it, and he went along with it, and he would have preferred English, you know, to help him.

In fact, it got to be so funny. My neighbor next door, after she got out and was playing with the neighbor kids, it was mishmash, you know. Like she was telling this little boy to wipe his foot at the door, and she'd say, "Foot you, foot you," before he came in. Then my neighbor next door said, "Gia, how do you say this in Greek?" They were outside. She said, "Dr. L____, we only speak Greek in the house." But it didn't keep her back. In fact, when we walked her to school the first day, she said, "Now, you remember, we don't speak Greek here."

ETTINGER: That's cute. That's really funny. Did your Greek language stay as strong as ever as you got older, as your daughter got older? You just kept it alive?

CAPARIS: Well, we sent her to a Greek school, because we still have a Greek school. We sent her for a little bit, but not for long because she got involved in other things. But she speaks fluently. Her children haven't learned any Greek. She didn't marry a Greek, you know. But she does all right. She went back two weeks this last summer, in fact. It comes back. She went with a friend there.

ETTINGER: Did you stay working while you were a young mother then?

CAPARIS: Well, what I did is I took a leave of absence when we went to Greece in '56, and I was going to go back to work. Then when I got home, I had worked a few months, and I thought, "Gee, this isn't fun. I want to stay home with Gia when she's little," so I resigned. Then in 19- . . . let's see. It was a big change in the program in the sixties, and they called me back and they said, "Will you come back? Come back."

By then I had gotten a real estate license and helped my husband after Gia went to school full-time. I could be home by the time she got out because I just got bored. They called me back, and he said, "[inaudible]," and Nick said, "You don't want to go back to work."

I said, "Oh, I think it could be kind of fun."

They said, "Well, come back for a month, try it, two months, whatever." So I went back and then got on the fast track, and I stayed for another, what was it, ten years, fifteen years.

ETTINGER: So you did like it? I mean you liked going back?

CAPARIS: Oh, I did. I mean I had an interesting career. I can't complain. I mean, I've done everything from washing dishes to . . . I was lucky. When I went to work the first time, I really had a wonderful mentor. He had just come down as manager from the North, and so he and I were the only new ones in the office. So I guess he only trusted me because I didn't know anything, you know, how it works. So he really pushed me along and pushed me along, gave me every opportunity. I could not complain. It was just wonderful.

ETTINGER: Was there a single Federal Building in Sacramento that you . . .

CAPARIS: We were in the old Post Office Building. You know where that is, where the skating rink is. So it was really an interesting career.

ETTINGER: When you went back in the sixties then, you were in the same office?

CAPARIS: No. Let's see. In the sixties when I went back, they were on . . . Is that J Street? No. Where's the *Sacramento Union*, where it used to be? Is it L? No. Must have been here someplace. I don't know. We were only there for a short time, right on the railroad tracks practically.

ETTINGER: Besides going to Greek school for a while, did your daughter do any other things either through the church or other, like folk dance or anything, any of those other activities?

CAPARIS: Oh, yeah, we always had folk dancing, too. Oh, yeah, she did that. She belonged to a youth group at church. But she was involved. She liked to ski. She took piano lessons, skiing lessons, the whole thing.

ETTINGER: When the church moved, which was in the fifties, was that literally because they'd just sort of outgrown in space, or what do you know about that?

CAPARIS: It had outgrown it. It was a small church. I mean, redevelopment was starting down there, because I think the state took it over, if I remember correctly. But I mean, we got this location, which is prime location. Now they're leaving this and going out to . . .

ETTINGER: The Alhambra church? The Alhambra location?

CAPARIS: Yeah. They're planning to build again, another church.

ETTINGER: Where would the new one be?

CAPARIS: It's on Highway 80. Do you know where the dump was on that side? Across the street from the dump. I don't know what that's called. It backs up to River Park or someplace, or Cal Expo, someplace like that, that piece of land there. They decided to build there. I don't know when that will be.

ETTINGER: That must have been kind of a controversial decision for the church or a hard one.

CAPARIS: It was a hard one for a lot of people, yeah.

ETTINGER: I'm sure when they moved from the first church to the second church, it was hard.

CAPARIS: Not so much, because we'd outgrown it. I mean, there was nothing there. I mean, the hall was that house, the basement, the first floor of that house.

There was nothing there. This church has a hall, we have a school, we have an apartment. We own the whole block except for that one little corner, and the doctor owns that.

ETTINGER: Are they moving out for space then?

CAPARIS: Well, they want to build a bigger hall. I don't know. They try to improve it.

ETTINGER: Your husband and you, were you active in the church or just attending through the fifties and sixties?

CAPARIS: Well, he was on the church council, but he didn't go and do anything more than that. He wasn't that active in it. We would go regularly. I taught Sunday school a while.

ETTINGER: When your daughter was young?

CAPARIS: No, before, before we had children, yeah.

ETTINGER: The number of priests at the church grew after the war, or was it always just . . .

CAPARIS: It was always one priest at a time, yeah. Changing, they'd move, transfer them someplace else. Father Georges was here a long time. Then we had Father Rotalis (phonetic), which is interesting, because my brother Paul in Oakland had him in his Sunday school class.

ETTINGER: Oh, that's funny.

CAPARIS: Yeah, I didn't know him very well. I just met him since we moved here.

ETTINGER: Did the dynamics of the community that you grew up with where you had this immigrant community and then this outlying community came in on Sundays, did that persist? Is the church still a draw that way?

CAPARIS: They still come from Marysville. They don't have a church there. We were getting Roseville and some still coming.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

ETTINGER: Okay.

CAPARIS: So that's that part. Then another thing, we've had such an influx of people from the East Coast, many from the Boston area after the war. See, what happened was fellows that were stationed here decided that it's much nicer in California, and they'd go back, and then come back with their families. So you go to church now and I don't know half or three-quarters of the people there.

ETTINGER: Oh, really?

CAPARIS: Yeah. A big change in the church itself. Back there, they're different. I mean most of the people, the older people that came out, grew up in, well, you don't want to say ghetto, but . . .

ETTINGER: Much stronger ethnic neighborhood?

CAPARIS: Ethnic neighborhoods, you know, and where here, we were more or less assimilated. We had our church, but we also had our outside life. It's

different, a lot different. So they're hardworking people. They're the ones that were really, really being the movers and the shakers.

ETTINGER: Successful.

CAPARIS: Over the years because of that. They had that ethic, that ethic, I think.

ETTINGER: That's very interesting. I didn't realize that. So when they show up and begin to get involved in the community, there's a kind of an insider/outsider . . .

CAPARIS: Yeah, in a different way. They would operate in a different way. I mean, some of the things we would never think of, never occur to us to do. But they were staying with a lot of the old ideas. They have a different viewpoint, you know.

ETTINGER: So they retain more traditional culture?

CAPARIS: Yeah, I think so. I think so. There were quite a few.

ETTINGER: Did you and your husband then befriend some of these East Coast sort of Greeks, or your husband, as an immigrant himself, connect more with recent immigrants, or not really?

CAPARIS: Well, some. Then some of the people that came from Greece later, you know, that came later, and I don't know, there's so many different groups now. There's not one group the way it was when we were down at the old church. I mean everybody knew everybody. But if there was a Saint's Day and they were celebrating their Saint's Day, everybody would go. You never invited anybody. I mean, it's St. Basil's, oh, we have to go

visit there. You'd go there and visit on their day, St. Peter's, St. George's. Now that's gone by the wayside. If anybody does celebrate that . . . We used to celebrate St. Nicholas Day. First, it was open house, you know, anybody that wanted to come. I remember Velma Way, our little house there would just be chockfull. But gradually it got so you got your friends to come, you'd keep telling and invite your friends. Now they've kind of gotten away from that. The young people don't even celebrate those Saint's Days anymore. People never celebrated their birthdays. They celebrated their Saint's Day.

ETTINGER: Right, and that practice kind of shifted?

CAPARIS: It's kind of shifted. It's maintained by some of the people that are new from Greece or maybe some of the East Coast. I don't know whether they still do that.

ETTINGER: When you were growing up, did you celebrate birth or Saint's Days?

CAPARIS: Oh, at home we celebrated our birthdays. You got presents on your birthday, but you also went to church on your Saint's Day. I remember St. Constantine and Helen, it was one day, and I'd get so angry because, you know, the men rated higher. I'd go to church, and they'd say, "Oh, well, happy Name Day for your brother," and never say anything to me. I'd go home, "I go to church, he didn't go, and they forget me and tell me happy Name Day for my brother?" Funny the things you think about.

ETTINGER: Well, I'm sure that would make an impression on you if it's your Saint's Day, too.

CAPARIS: It's my Saint's Day, too.

ETTINGER: Was there other things like that, differences, sorting between boys and girls that you remember growing up, which may have been typical of a lot of groups, but things like that, expectations for you versus your brothers, or privileges?

CAPARIS: Oh, I don't know. I'm just thinking. In my house, our parents treated us equally. If anybody wanted to go on to school, they could go on to school. If you didn't, and that was your choice. I don't know. I don't know, because I had this one family, family that we were close with, I don't know really. I couldn't tell you.

ETTINGER: We've kind of hopped around a lot of different places.

CAPARIS: I know, it's been a hodgepodge, hasn't it?

ETTINGER: I think it's worked well. But we started with your parents and then But what else? Is there anything that you thought maybe we would talk about that we didn't land on discussing, memories?

CAPARIS: Well, let me see. I remember that when they had community meetings like in the old church, I mean, there were a lot of fireworks, a lot of strong opinions on all sides. My younger brother was always so interested in hearing this, he'd say, "I'm going to take my lunch and go up there." We'd say, "We're going to the movies." "No, I'm going to go there, this

is going to be a better show.” But very strong feelings, and either politics of the church or politics on the outside.

ETTINGER: This would be on a Saturday?

CAPARIS: A Sunday after church. See, most people worked on Saturdays.

ETTINGER: Right. So they came, there was church, and then there were the various parish meetings and group meetings.

CAPARIS: Yeah, parish meetings afterwards.

ETTINGER: So were there fireworks about . . .

CAPARIS: Oh, politics in the community, I mean, you know, we like the priest, you don’t like the priest, it was always something, you know, going on I remember when we were young.

Then the other thing I remember was the Saint’s Days that I was talking about. We loved them as kids because the whole family would go, you know, and the parents would have a big party and everything, the kids were having their own party. Then, you know, we’d just did our own thing. The young kids were playing outside. Go in the afternoon and we’d visit in the afternoon sometimes, and that was like a formal call. But if it’s in the evening when a whole party and everybody was there, it’s usually out someplace like usually we’d love to go to these farms.

ETTINGER: Sounds like a lot of fun.

CAPARIS: Then we’d visit San Francisco. As youngsters, I remember the organizations they had there. We’d visit, the young people would visit.

They would visit here. We'd meet them. I think I mentioned down to Fresno we'd go to We've retained our old friends. But a lot of them are gone.

ETTINGER: What do you think these visits to San Francisco, these visits to Fresno, the organizations, did parents, the older generation, have in mind that their children should get to know each other? Did they have friends? Was it about marriage possibilities?

CAPARIS: I think it was the Greek thing, you know, first generation. There was no question about it, you know. It was just that's what you're going to do, and somehow it worked. We worked through that generation.

ETTINGER: There's a large Greek community in San Francisco.

CAPARIS: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah, prominent people there. George Christopher was a mayor there. There was another Greek mayor, too. I didn't know him. Because there were families that have been there for a long time.

In fact, before they had My mother said they didn't have a priest here when she came, and the priest would come from San Francisco periodically. The priest would come from someplace. The first wedding she went to was like early '21 or late '20, was in Yuba City. So they drove from here to this farm there, my dad and his partner and my mother, and they were waiting for the priest to come. The men were cooking, and the bride was sitting there all dressed and waiting, you know, for him to come. But he had to come from San Francisco, and that was a two-lane

road, and I don't know how fast those Fords went in those days. He didn't come until late afternoon. My mom said the men were feeling no pain by then, dancing and singing and everything. The poor bride was just sitting there. [Laughs]

ETTINGER: That's great.

CAPARIS: I remember she said that was their first impression of a wedding here. Where she was raised, most ceremonies were on a weekday, I mean. I don't know whether they thought the peasants got married on Sunday or what, but it was like on a Thursday, you know. Proper weddings.

ETTINGER: But they would have been in a church for sure, right?

CAPARIS: Yeah, in the church. Well, I don't know. Come to think of it, I don't know whether she was married in church or married in her home, what they did. A lot of the ceremonies weren't in church. Baptisms were at home. They had the church downtown, and I've been told I was the first child baptized on the register here. But I wasn't baptized in the church. I was baptized at home, my parents' home.

ETTINGER: A priest came out to the house?

CAPARIS: Yes, yes. I've been to weddings in homes, you know, where they had the wedding. They had the church, but the people weren't married there. many christenings were out on ranches. I don't know. I don't know how that came about.

ETTINGER: But then by the time you were twelve, fifteen, then did . . .

CAPARIS: Oh, they were all in the church.

ETTINGER: The baptisms were all in the church. That's really interesting.

CAPARIS: Yeah, even downtown, they were all in the church.

ETTINGER: A lot of changes.

CAPARIS: A lot of changes, a lot of changes. We have a strong Sunday school now and a lot of children going there. The children go. We have many intermarriages now, too, I mean a lot of converts. Our church doesn't cost a lot, you know. But people join, either by marriage or otherwise.

ETTINGER: The external marriage, probably marrying outside of the community, really took off in the fifties and sixties more regularly?

CAPARIS: After the war, after World War II, later on.

ETTINGER: Were there battles over that or misgivings or was it something people talked about, or was it just . . .

CAPARIS: No, it just happened. It just happened. It just happened. Well, before I got married, in those years, when somebody did that . . . I remember a gal here, she was a couple years older than I was, but she married a non-Greek. They didn't think that was the right thing to do. But all my friends married Greeks.

ETTINGER: Would that person who married outside, could she still come to church? Was she still part of the community?

CAPARIS: No, they kind of wandered off, you know, it just happened then. Doesn't happen that much anymore. I mean, they all come to church.

ETTINGER: Now you have a lot of children in Sunday school that are third and fourth generation?

CAPARIS: Yeah, and they don't understand Greek. Our church, most of it is in English, except the choir. We have a gorgeous choir. Have you ever been to our church?

ETTINGER: I've never been to your church. I'd like to go.

CAPARIS: Oh, we have a beautiful choir. It's all in Greek. I wouldn't want it any other way. But when I was in the choir, and I didn't understand, because it's formal Greek. It isn't your everyday spoken Greek, you know. So you could read it. Well, now I know more about it because I've gotten involved but I'm finding things out today that I never knew. But most of it, I would say, was in Greek, except some prayers the priest says, and some of them he says both in Greek and in English, like the Lord's Prayer is in both, the Creed is in both, but the choir has remained all in Greek. It's gorgeous.

ETTINGER: When you were in the choir as a child, it was all Greek?

CAPARIS: Oh, yeah, everything was all Greek. That's what I'm saying. But we didn't know what we were singing because that Greek was not the Greek that was spoken at home. My mother spoke the more formal Greek, which I mean it was in the plural. I would never have addressed you. It would be in the plural. But like my brother, Gus, had a heck of a time, he could never keep it straight. But the Greek in the church is deeper Greek than

most people understand. But it's going more so more with English. It's going to be all English one of these days. I hate to see the choir change, but that's because it's so beautiful. But you really should visit.

ETTINGER: I'd love to. I'd love to. Maybe I'll make a point of coming sometime.

CAPARIS: Yes, it's ten o'clock.

ETTINGER: Maybe I will. Well, is there anything else we want to?

CAPARIS: I can't think of anything. I was thinking of a lot of things before I spoke to you, but I can't remember them all now. But anything you want to ask me, you know.

ETTINGER: No. Well, thank you very much for your time. I think this is going to be really a great . . .

CAPARIS: You're welcome.

[interruption]

CAPARIS: When the restaurant and coffee shop was on, what was it, Fourth and I, they'd come off the freight trains or the trains, and they'd come looking for work or looking for something to eat, and my dad never liked to say no. So my mother used to joke our house got painted one side at a time, you know. He'd say, "Well, now go to my wife, she'll have something for you to do over there." So my mother would say paint the house. So they'd paint one side and off they'd go.

Then there was a young man. In fact, he just died a couple of years ago, and my brother John kept in touch with him. He came in and

he gave him a room to stay and something to eat and helped him, I've forgotten, to help around there, and then he talked him into going back home. He was from the East Coast someplace, and he went back home and he got a job with one of the music publishing companies back there. I can't think of the name now. But he knew I played the piano, so he sent me all this sheet music. But they always kept in touch, because he got him back connected with his family again, you know. But you have that. You'd have that. I remember that house, one side at a time.

ETTINGER: That's a great image.

CAPARIS: Yeah, yeah. Everybody used to make their own wine.

ETTINGER: Oh, really, during Prohibition or after?

CAPARIS: During the Prohibition, yeah. They'd have a barrel of wine in the basement, and then, of course, they'd always talk about these big Irish cops, and just gave them a few bucks and they'd just look the other way. But you know, they weren't selling it. Well, maybe some were selling it, some of them that had the All the homes had their wine.

ETTINGER: They just bought grapes from farmers out in the . . .

CAPARIS: Yeah, they'd buy them, buy the must from like Lodi's right here, you know, bring the wine in the barrel, the must, put it in the basement.

ETTINGER: your parents did that as well?

CAPARIS: My dad didn't drink. I'll bet he's the only Greek that never drank.

ETTINGER: It was probably good in his business to not, right?

CAPARIS: Yeah. It sounds so funny. Well, his family didn't. You know, his nephew didn't, they just weren't into it. He may have had a beer on a cold day, but I never even saw him doing that, where his partner really liked to drink and sing and gather all his old buddies, then they'd have a good time.

My mother was always up, and he'd call and he'd say, "I'm coming and I'm bringing these two buddies from Marysville or Yuba City or something," and he'd bring a side of beef or a side of things. She'd cook and they'd sit there and drink their wine and sing, feel no pain, you know. I remember that.

ETTINGER: So your father hung out with some drinkers, but he, himself . . .

CAPARIS: He wouldn't be there. He'd be taking care of business.

ETTINGER: Well, thank you again.

CAPARIS: You're welcome.

[End of December 12, 2005 interview]